

Israel escalates assault on Lebanon and drives to annex Gaza

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Israeli strikes killed at least four people in Southern Lebanon on Friday, and the military ordered the forced displacement of nine more towns and villages in the Sidon district.

Hundreds of families fled Aanqoun, a village already sheltering some 2,500 people displaced from earlier attacks, after the army announced it would strike what it called Hezbollah positions there and ordered residents out. Cars jammed the roads toward Sidon as families searched for shelter.

The Lebanon strikes are an escalation of the Israeli war, waged in coordination with the US-Israeli war against Iran, that has killed at least 3,516 people and wounded 10,674 since March 2, the Lebanese health ministry reported. The United Nations counted at least 88 killed over the May 30-31 weekend, and Israeli attacks killed at least eight on Tuesday, nine on Wednesday and four on Thursday. Among the dead was a paramedic, one of more than 130 medics killed since March.

On Thursday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared the occupation of Southern Lebanon permanent. Israel needs “security zones: separation and security areas on the other side of the border,” he told mayors in Northern Israel. “This is a fundamental change.”

While the US media remains focused on “peace” negotiations between Trump and Iran, events in Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank make clear that any “ceasefire” is merely a cover for ongoing mass killing.

On Wednesday the United States announced that Israel and Lebanon had agreed to renew a ceasefire, one requiring Hezbollah to halt all fire and pull its fighters back from Southern Lebanon but demanding nothing of Israel’s occupying forces. Hours later, Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz declared that the army would not

withdraw, that hundreds of thousands of displaced Lebanese would not be allowed home and that Israel retains “freedom of action, backed by the United States, to strike in Beirut.” Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem rejected the deal, telling Al-Manar television that ordering his fighters to leave the south while under attack would mean “surrender, defeat and achieving the enemy’s goals.”

A United Nations peacekeeper was killed near Marjayoun by mortar fire that Israel and Hezbollah each blamed on the other.

Israeli forces seized Beaufort Castle and crossed the Litani River last week, pushing their occupation to about 2,000 square kilometers of Southern Lebanon, nearly one-fifth of the country. The Israeli military, armed and backed by US President Donald Trump, has turned the south into a free-fire zone.

The United Nations humanitarian office reported more than a million people driven from their homes and 1.24 million, nearly a quarter of the population, going hungry.

In Gaza, Netanyahu said last week that Israel holds 60 percent of the strip, up from 50, and that he has ordered the army to take more. “First of all, 70,” he said, as the crowd shouted “100!”

Under the October 2025 ceasefire built on Trump’s 20-point plan, Israeli forces were to pull back behind a so-called yellow line; instead, they have pushed past it.

The Gaza health ministry has counted 929 Palestinians killed and 2,811 wounded in the seven months since the truce took effect. Katz announced May 27 that the “voluntary emigration” plan to empty Gaza of its people would proceed “at the right timing and in the right manner.”

Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has demanded the army “prepare immediately for the full

conquest of the Gaza Strip” and build Jewish settlements on it. Rights groups call the emigration scheme a plan for ethnic cleansing.

In the occupied West Bank, Israeli forces shot and killed a seven-month-old Palestinian baby near Hebron on Friday and wounded his parents.

The escalations in Lebanon and Palestine take place amid a deepening crisis over the US-Israeli war on Iran. The war has failed to achieve its aims. On February 28, the US and Israel launched a surprise attack that killed much of the Iranian leadership, including Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and as many as ten other senior officials. This failed to bring about the collapse of the regime; Khamenei’s son Mojtaba was installed within days, and no uprising came.

The US then moved to strangle Iran with a naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, but this effort has likewise failed to force Tehran to terms. More than three months on, 13 US service members are dead, and the fighting drags on with no end in sight.

The reported differences between Trump and Netanyahu are a falling-out among thieves over that failure. Axios reported June 1 that Trump called Netanyahu “crazy” over the Lebanon escalation, adding, “You’d be in prison if it weren’t for me” and “Everybody hates Israel because of this.” Trump confirmed the call June 3, saying he was “a little bit perturbed” but that he likes Netanyahu and had told him, “we’ve got to stop this.”

Despite the “ceasefire” talks, the US is regularly attacking Iran. This week US forces struck Iranian radar sites after shooting down four Iranian drones over the Strait of Hormuz, which the US is blockading. Trump extended the ceasefire indefinitely and said the blockade would hold until negotiations end “one way or the other.”

The Democratic Party shares the war’s aims. On Thursday the House defeated a War Powers resolution by Democratic Representatives Rashida Tlaib of Michigan and Delia Ramirez of Illinois to remove US forces from the war in Lebanon, 324-92. Ninety-one Democrats voted for it; 117 voted against, and the only Republican in favor was Thomas Massie.

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, Minority Whip Katherine Clark and Caucus Chair Pete Aguilar led the opposition. In a joint statement, they declared: “We stand with the Lebanese people, the government

of Lebanon, and the Lebanese Armed Forces in their efforts to live peacefully and defeat Hezbollah, a violent terrorist organization that is a sworn enemy of the United States.”

The statement exposes the real policy of the Democratic Party. Despite its tactical criticisms of the Trump administration, it backs the administration’s basic aim of subjugating the Middle East.

Whatever “deal” Trump strikes with Tehran—if such an agreement is even possible—Lebanon and Gaza show its content in advance. Katz will not leave the south; Netanyahu intends to take the rest of Gaza and the displaced of both will not be allowed home. An agreement with this administration means continued slaughter and plunder, signed and dated.



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